DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 428 195 CE 078 228

TITLE	Enhancing Team Performance.
PUB DATE	1997-03-00
NOTE	16p.; In: Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) Conference Proceedings (Atlanta, Georgia, March 6-9, 1997); see CE 078 221. The paper by Brauchle and Wright is not included.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Consultants; Human Resources; Influences; Information Networks; Interpersonal Competence; *Job Performance; Job Training; *Labor Force Development; *Manufacturing Industry; Models; Organizational Climate; *Organizational Communication; *Teamwork; Training Methods; Work Environment
IDENTIFIERS	Impact Studies

ABSTRACT

This document contains two papers from a symposium on enhancing team performance. "The Impact of Organizational Sub-Cultures on Information Sharing: A Manufacturing Company's Dilemma" (Toni Powell) reports on a qualitative study that examined the subcultures of a company involved in significant change and noted the effects of conflicting values on the organization's information-sharing network. The study identified three themes reflecting the stages through which managers and workers in the subclasses began improving their information-sharing system: conflicting values, unlearning, and reframing cultures. "Team Learning Consultation: Pilot Study of an Alternative to Process Consultation: (John Redding, Laurel Jeris, Jeanne Connolly, Michael Moran) explains how a study that explored team learning consultation as an alternative to process consultation to guide team-based interventions accomplished the following: obtained preliminary evidence that the team learning consultation model offers a practical and usable template for enhancing team-level training; suggested that increased preparation, training, and support of both team members and team learning consultants may be needed for full realization of the framework's potential; and identified typical team responses to the team learning process and the implications of those responses for effective deployment of the team learning consultation model. (MN)

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ED 428 195

ACADEMY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

1997 Conference Proceedings

March 6-9, 1997
Atlanta, GA

6 **Enhancing Team Performance**

Chair: Val Kosky, University of Scranton

The Impact of Organizational Sub-Cultures on Information Sharing: A Manufacturing Company's Dilemma
Toni Powell, Barry University

Team Learning Consultation: Pilot Study of an Alternative to Process Consultation
John Redding, Institute for Strategic Learning
Laurel Jeris, Benedictine University
Jeanne Connolly, Northern Illinois University
Michael Moran, Northern Illinois University

Teambuilding Intervention Strategy Deployment: When Companies Don't Listen to Consultants
Paul E. Brauchle, Illinois State University
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The Impact of Organizational Sub-Cultures on Information Sharing: A Manufacturing Company's Dilemma

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This study examined the sub-cultures of a company involved in significant change and noted the effects of conflicting values on the organization's information sharing network. A qualitative study was used. From the data three themes emerged which reflected the stages through which managers and workers in the sub-cultures began improving their information sharing system.

With the increasing pressure to compete globally, organizations confront a plethora of new information that must be shared and distributed throughout the system. New goals, new strategies, new structures all stretch the limits of a company's information network. If the information system is historically weak, as many are (Huber, 1996), the company faces real difficulties in knowing where specific items of information are located and how to disseminate them.

This paper examines the information sharing system of a mid-sized global company that manufactures blood analysis instruments. Franklin Manufacturers (a fictitious name) has undergone dramatic strategic change efforts to compete successfully in the global market. Recently, the company was recommended for International Organizational Standardization (ISO) certification. To obtain full certification, corporate headquarters increased pressure on all departments to streamline their processes and function more efficiently. In addition, managers were warned that all departments had to follow the same standards as the Large Instruments Manufacturing Department (identified in the remainder of this paper simply as "Manufacturing"). Corporate heads pointed with pride at Manufacturing's self-directed work team, thought of as the most productive in the company. Team members from Manufacturing, interviewed in an earlier study (Powell,1996), reported that they felt completely free from external control in their decision making, that autonomy was encouraged and employee empowerment rewarded. My observations of the team and the department supported this perception. Information became available to workers when needed, and was disseminated openly. Even new information, which generally is more difficult and time consuming to disseminate and process (Huber, 1996), appeared to be handled in this department with little decrease in productivity. Unfortunately, workers from other departments had not been trained to be autonomous decision makers and did not feel empowered. As a result, these departments appeared unwilling or unable to make the changes necessary to emulate the practices of Manufacturing. These workers seemed to experience considerable difficulty in sharing new information. In my conversations with team members, supervisors and managers from the Manufacturing, Re-Manufacturing and Engineering Departments, I found three themes, or patterns, which continued to emerge: conflicting values, reframing cultures and unlearning. The purpose of my research was to determine how these themes impacted on the information sharing system of this organization.

Theoretical Framework

This study was grounded in the theoretical areas of organizational culture and information distribution. The grounded theory approach, formulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) requires that data and theory be constantly compared and contrasted throughout the data collection and analysis process. In using this process, I found that the data revealed themes which appeared, then disappeared, re-appeared, shifted and then began to grow more clearly.

The themes emerged from organizational culture theory. An organizational culture "includes a pattern of basic assumptions developed by its members over time, thought to be valid and taught

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to new members as a correct way to perceive, think and feel" (Schein, 1990, p.111). From systems theory comes the premise that the organization, as a system, tends toward a kind of equilibrium and tries to reduce dissonance, bringing assumptions and beliefs into alignment with each other (Schein, 1990; Lewin, 1952). However, just as a system contains sub-systems, the organizational culture often develops sub-cultures which, in turn, create dissonance and disharmony. Each sub-culture develops its own communication network, over time, evolves into a unique subset of norms, assumptions and behaviors. The more dissonant or isolated a sub-system becomes from the main system, the more ineffectual are the processes by which information is distributed and disseminated. According to Huber (1996), information is most effectively retrieved when it is widely distributed in the organization. The more information is shared openly, the more learning occurs in individual units or departments. Simon (1996) supported this perspective: "What one person in an organization learns depends on what is already known by other organization members and what other kinds of information is available in the workplace" (p.176). Simon referred to this type of information sharing as internal learning and defined it as "transmission of information from one organizational memory or group to another" (p.176). However, when information is not widely shared, the organizational learning may be minimal. Some department members may experience a great deal of internal learning; others experience very little. At Franklin Manufacturing, the departments with the most effective information sharing system appeared to be the most successful in distributing and processing new information needed to effectively produce, service, market and repair new equipment. Other departments which historically had been left out of the information sharing loop, continued to be left out. In fact, some have argued (Huber, 1996; Isabella, 1990), the more technical and obtuse the information, the more traumatic are the effects of being left out. This is probably a result of common interpretations which develop (or, in the case of those left out of the loop, don't develop) from the processing of new information. Some of the diversity literature questions the need for common interpretations, pointing to the greater potential in creativity and richness in decision making options when there is more range and variation in the interpretations (Huber,1996). However, without shared understanding of a variety of interpretations, units may operate in isolation.

Research Questions

In a previous study (Powell, 1996), I asked team members from the Manufacturing and Re-Manufacturing Departments at Franklin Manufacturers to discuss how their team experiences affected their work lives. During the interviews, I found that the perceptions team members from Manufacturing had of their value to the organization differed greatly from those of Re-Manufacturing. The climate at Manufacturing was friendly and relaxed; department members were cheerful and positive. What's more, they believed that other departments at Franklin were similar. They spoke with pride of their managers' new "boundaryless" supervision practices (Bennett and O'Brien, 1994), which eliminated many of the policies and procedures associated with old hierarchical practices and chains of command. This Department had many of the characteristics of a learning organization which Bennett and O'Brien describe as having "woven a continuous and enhanced capacity to learn, adapt and change into its culture" (1944,p.41). However, no continuous learning practice can be totally effective in isolation. Although Manufacturing believed that the entire company operated from a learning organizational model, the reality, system-wide, was quite different. Prior to a rotation in managers, however, Re-Manufacturing workers were grim and secretive. They did not smile or greet each other. Most conversations among workers appeared to take place outside of the building, at lunch time or at breaks. And, although an informal communication network of sorts did exist within the department, members were unaware that their work climate was different from other departments, that the company had successful, supported self-directed work teams or that practices such as boundaryless supervision were in operation in other departments. Their perception was that Franklin Manufacturing was permeated by dictatorial managers who ruled every aspect of the workers' lives. As a consequence, department members felt helpless and entrapped.

My research questions for this study emerged from these conversations I had with team members. Soon after I had completed these team interviews, I became interested in a broader, more systemic perspective and began to include supervisors and managers in my interviewing. In addition, I had more conversations with department members of Engineering. I wanted to more clearly understand how such different work environments, or sub-cultures, could exist within the confines of one organization. What did their separate, and often conflicting existences suggest about the information sharing processes operating between the two departments? By including members of the Engineering Department, I wanted to determine if any other departments were as isolated from the organization's mission as Re-Manufacturing. The purpose of this study was to understand the relationship between disparate and isolated sub-cultures at a manufacturing company and the organization's information processing system. More specifically, how do conflicting sub-cultures impact on the success of the company's information dissemination efforts? How does the information sharing system affect the conflicting sub-cultures? Finally, how could the company integrate the experiences of one department into the organization's information system? What would have to occur to enable Franklin Manufacturing to truly become a learning organization?

Methodology

I selected fourteen workers and six managers to participate in this study. One of my assumptions was that the view of managers is crucial to understanding the effects of organizational change on the information network. Daft and Weick (1984) and Isabella (1990) have shown that managers play a crucial role in information processing by interpreting events and creating meaning for other department members. I asked the managers to describe their work environments and to compare and contrast them with those of other departments. Next, I asked them to discuss how information was distributed and shared in their departments. To discover the collective perspectives of other department members, I also interviewed five workers from Manufacturing, six from Re-Manufacturing and three from Engineering, none of whom I had talked with in the previous study. My interviews with them were quite similar to those of the managers. They discussed their perceptions of their work world, how their departments differed from others and how they received and shared information. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim so that the data could be systematically analyzed. In addition to the interviews, I observed the work environments of the three departments. The observational notes included numerous references to changes in how department members responded to organizational changes which affected their work lives.

I organized the data which emerged from the interviews and observations into the following categories, or themes: *conflicting values*, occurring when one department's norms and philosophy opposes those of other departments, *unlearning*, defined by Hedberg (1981) as the process through which learners discard knowledge. and *reframing culture*, the process of shifting or changing a sub-culture to reflect dominant organizational values. After completing the data collection, and reviewing each interview transcript, I selected sections of the interviews which were repetitive and indicated patterns or themes. I recorded these sections on separate sheets of paper and then coded them into the categories identified above. To obtain verification of my coding procedures, I had two independent reviewers code most of the data. The reviewers assigned twelve of the fifteen sections of verbatim transcripts to the same categories I had selected. I then examined the coded categories and their relationships with each other for patterns or themes that would help me understand the frequency of these categories. Organization members from Franklin Manufacturing also assisted in this process.

Results

The data from this research revealed an organization in transition. The three categories into which I coded the data reflect dominant themes which are grounded in organizational culture and

information sharing theory. The themes can be characterized as stages in this company's struggle through this transitional process as it relates to the information sharing system. I have used each of these stages as historical markers to discuss the results of this study.

Conflicting Values The ineffectual information sharing process at Franklin was closely related to the contradictory norms and values emerging from some of the more isolated departmental sub-cultures such as Re-Manufacturing and Engineering. Communication patterns developed over time resulted in a "broken information loop", as a former Engineering manager described it, with some departments receiving all the information they needed all of the time and others receiving very little information most of the time. For example, department workers in Manufacturing assured me that "since they {their managers} know that we need to know what we need to know to solve all the problems they give us, they're going to make sure we have whatever it is we need to find a solution." None of them could recall a time when they could not obtain information they needed. At Re-Manufacturing, however, three managers, all of whom had been transferred there within the past few months, described the equipment, technical processes and information gathering system as "prehistoric". They felt that the workers had learned to "milk the system" to handle their frustration at "not being allowed to do their job right". Department workers confirmed this perception when I spoke with them. In addition to complaining about the lack of resources or support they had received from their former managers to do their jobs, they had little knowledge of the technical support and resources available to workers in other departments. In fact, they seemed unusually unaware of the achievements, both collective and individual, of their co-workers in productive departments such as Manufacturing. Clearly, the differences among the departments' cultures produced conflicting norms. Manufacturing's democratic management style encouraged autonomous decision makers. Re-Manufacturing's directive style produced workers who had become dependent, passive and manipulative. Engineering had developed a third, and equally as contradictory, set of norms. "We encouraged our people to be separate, to see themselves as different...even as better, because everyone relied on us. But maybe that wasn't such a good idea because people got jealous and kept us out of the decision making," reported a former Engineering manager. Workers from this department commented on the sense of isolation they felt from the rest of the organization and how little they knew about new processes and new techniques developed by Manufacturing "until they have to let us know. That's the problem for us, I think. They have to share information with us but they don't like us so they don't tell us anything until they have to....and they don't include us in on the decision making plans."

Unlearning When Franklin was recommended for ISO certification, the company began an organization-wide training and development effort. During the process, corporate heads recognized the disparity in production levels between departments and, to some extent, the "broken information loop", which prevented many organization members from obtaining valuable problem solving information. Consequently, with the pressure to retain certification, division heads have been warned to do whatever is necessary to bring their departments up to ISO standards. One of the first strategies employed by division heads has been to switch former Manufacturing and Engineering managers to Re-Manufacturing and, in one case, a Manufacturing manager to Engineering. Three of the managers I interviewed who had recently been transferred to Re-Manufacturing described the climate there, as "prehistoric" and "like working with a bunch of dinosaurs". These perceptions have impacted heavily on the workers, many of whom have become aware for the first time of how they are perceived in other departments. Unlearning is analogous to Lewin's concept of "unfreezing," the term used to describe the first felt need for change (1951). Unlearning and unfreezing open the way for new learning to take place, a stage essential for organizational change. I included the following comments of a Re-Manufacturing worker under the Unlearning theme: "This place is like Siberia. It's like we don't count. Nobody tells us anything. Well, we just can't put up with this any longer." Another worker said he thought "we need to be more like Manufacturing...to come together more...you know, to meet more. These guys {the new managers} tell us that they want us to meet without them more and decide things on our own more. Yeah, but if we screw up, then what?" The distrust and frustration expressed by this worker suggests another effect of unlearning. Because this department

is giving up its previous script, or set of acceptable behaviors, it becomes nearly somewhat paralyzed, temporarily, while a new script is being written (Huber, 1996). For workers and managers alike, this is a very frustrating process. Productivity slows down as managers encourage risk taking to develop new behaviors. "We have to tell them it's okay to make mistakes. And it is. But when they make them, everything slows down to a halt," one manager commented. Clearly, the Unlearning stage is an uncomfortable one for workers and managers, alike. It is, however, the first indication that organization members recognize a need for dramatic change in their work lives.

Reframing Cultures This theme, or stage of development, is similar, in Lewin's change model, to "moving". Moving is the implementation stage, where activities and events clearly show that change is occurring. Isabella (1990) believes that symbolism is an important part of this stage, where new norms and behaviors are learned and a culture is shifted. One example of a symbolic message I heard repeated by managers in all three departments was the phrase "Let me play golf." Managers in Manufacturing used this phrase to illustrate their management style: "My team knows what to do. They don't have to come to me. They make their own decisions and I get to play golf." At Re-Manufacturing the expression has become indicative of the goal managers have set for their workers. One manager reported that he tells his workers every day "Your job is to make my job look easy. You solve all the problems and I get to play golf." Isabella (1990) suggests that once an established routine has been disrupted, "managers search their surroundings for clues from which to derive new meaning or reconfirm old understanding, and symbols provide that valuable information. Symbols bring double exposures into focus" (p.25). Another symbolic phrase members used to describe necessary change in the information sharing system was "opening the loop." A former Engineering manager, now in Re-Manufacturing, said "We have to get them {Manufacturing and Corporate} to open the loop. It was the same there {Engineering} as it is here. We aren't in the loop. The loop's gotta get fixed. We'll just have to make them open it up to us."

Implications

The themes from this study have several implications for HRD professionals in their role as organizational change agents. First, managers at Franklin clearly need expertise in "fixing the loop." The frustration expressed by the manager from Engineering, that he would "just have to make them open it {the information network} up to us" is illustrative of the lack of training in implementing cultural change and improving internal communication lines. Mink (1994) suggests training managers in dealing with confrontation and collusion and publishing a company newsletter designed specifically to share information about new equipment and techniques. Secondly, HRD professionals are essential for enlisting the support of top level executives for organizational change. As one of the new Re-Manufacturing managers said: "Nothing major is going to happen until Corporate wants it to happen. We can improve the quality of this department a little but we're never going to get the help from the rest of Franklin until everybody is committed to this. And nobody's going to give up the way they do business...or communicate... until Corporate says they have to." To transform this company into a learning organization, Franklin needs a common language and common mental models, cutting across the subcultures of the organization. The HRD profession is specifically designed to lead such an effort.

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Team Learning Consultation: Pilot Study of an Alternative to Process Consultation

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This study explored team learning consultation as an alternative to process consultation to guide team-based interventions. It provides preliminary evidence that this model offers a practical and usable template for enhancing team level learning. It suggests that increased preparation, training, and support of both team members and team learning consultants may be needed to fully realize the framework's potential. The study also identifies typical team responses to the team learning process and explores their implications for the effective deployment of the team learning consultant role.

Background and Theoretical Framework

For three decades, process consultation has provided an influential conceptual framework to guide interventions designed to increase team effectiveness (Schein, 1969). The process consultant purposefully avoids contributing subject expertise or influencing the content of team decisions and solutions. Instead, the consultant focuses almost exclusively upon the team's process. Typical interventions include assisting teams to clarify goals, roles, agendas, and decision-making processes; to build team trust and cohesion; and to reduce interpersonal conflict. Process consultants are careful in choosing when to intervene, many operating by the guideline, "if you aren't sure whether to intervene, don't."

Recently, interest has grown in the role of teams as vehicles for organizational learning. Senge identifies teams, both formal and informal, as the "key learning units in organizations" (1990, p. 236). The organizational learning literature has speculated that a framework other than process consultation may be required to assist a team with its learning process. It suggests that, when compared with process consultation, a more active and confrontational approach may be required. A team may not want help or be aware of the help it needs, given the "defensive routines" that are often exhibited limiting deeper levels of questioning and learning. Moreover, the process consultant's focus on building cohesion and reducing conflict may limit the use of interventions that help a team question assumptions and maintain levels of creative tension needed to maximize team learning.

This paper describes the third in a series of studies designed to examine the role of the team consultant from an organizational learning perspective. This research began with the following questions:

- To what degree does the process consultation model provide a relevant framework to guide interventions designed to enhance team learning?
- Would an alternative framework to process consultation be a more effective approach to guiding team learning interventions? If so, what would be the key defining features of such a framework?

Study #1. A preliminary study (Jeris, May, and Redding, 1996) used the Redding and Catalanello (1994) strategic learning cycle model to examine the learning processes of three teams in three separate organizations. According to this model, the team learning process can be represented as a learning cycle comprised of three phases: planning, implementing, and reflecting. (See Figure 1.)

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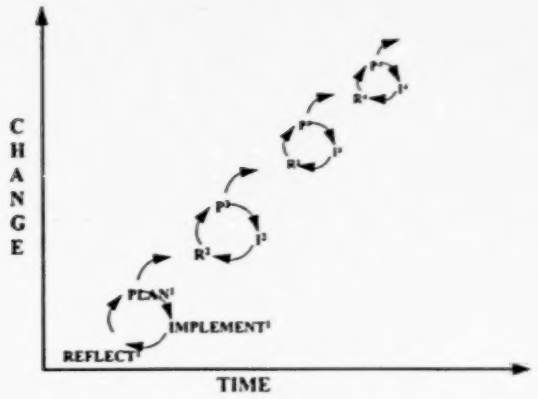
Figure 1. The Relationship of Organizational Learning Cycles to Organizational Change



Three factors are felt to determine the degree of organizational change that occurs over a period of time: speed, depth, and breadth. *Speed* refers to the number of cycles that occur over a given period of time. *Depth* refers to the transformational quality (or "double-loop" learning) that occurs as a result of each learning cycle (Argyris & Schon, 1996). *Breadth* refers to the degree to which the learning process impacts the organization as a whole system.

In the preliminary study, teams were provided with team consultants who possessed considerable background and experience as process consultants. Throughout the process, the researchers gathered data that allowed them to make assessments of the speed, depth, and breadth of learning in the three teams. Among the study's conclusions were the following:

1. Each team missed many opportunities to increase the speed, depth, and breadth of learning.
2. Teams were either unaware or unwilling to ask for help from team consultants.
3. Process-oriented consultants often chose not to intervene with teams at times and in ways that may have helped teams to learn.

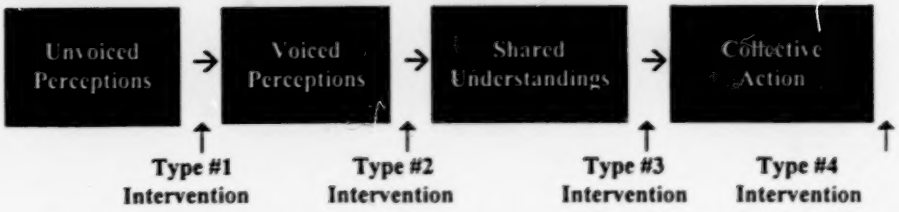
This study led to two conclusions: 1) teams needed external assistance to maximize the levels of team learning; 2) process consultation did not provide an adequate framework to guide interventions to enhance team learning.

Study #2. The second study sought to define the parameters of an alternative framework to process consultation as a model for team-based interventions. Using a grounded theory methodology, each of the "missed opportunities" for learning identified in the preliminary study were categorized as follows:

Missed Opportunity #1	Team members possessed perceptions about the direction of team activities that they never voiced to the team.
Missed Opportunity #2	Team members expressed concerns about the direction of team activities, but these perceptions were not integrated into new understandings of the situation by the team.
Missed Opportunity #3	Team members were able to create a new shared understanding of the situation. However, no new actions were taken that reflected the new understanding.

Based on these categorizations of missed opportunities, the study identified four separate types of interventions that appear to have the potential to increase the speed, depth, and breadth of team learning. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2. Team Learning Consultation Interventions



Type 1 Interventions: From Unvoiced Perceptions to Voiced Perceptions. Type 1 interventions focus on encouraging the public expression of perceptions, questions, and concerns about the team's direction that are not being voiced and that are important to its future learning.

Type 2 Interventions: From Voiced Perceptions to Shared Understandings. Type 2 interventions are directed toward helping the team incorporate individual perspectives into new, collectively shared understandings of the situation at hand.

Type 3 Interventions: From Shared Understandings to Collective Action. Type 3 interventions are aimed to create a collectively endorsed plan of action that will be executed on behalf of the team. It is this action that will produce the knowledge and information needed for future learning.

Type 4 Interventions: Reflection on the Team's Learning Process. Type 4 interventions assist the team in reviewing its learning processes and identifying steps that can be taken to enhance future learning.

These four types of interventions form the basis of the "team learning consultation" framework, representing an alternative model for team-based interventions. When compared to process consultation, the adoption of the role of the team learning consultant was felt to require the modification of several operating guidelines for intervention. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Process Consultation vs. Team Learning Consultation: A Comparison of Operating Guidelines

Operating Guidelines for Process Consultation	Operating Guidelines for Team Learning Consultation
• Interventions need to occur in a climate of trust and safety.	• The consultant may need to act even if a climate of trust and safety does not exist.
• Teams must want help and agree to this help through a formal "contracting" relationship.	• Teams may not want help or recognize the need for help.
• The consultant's role is to help the team accomplish what it wants to accomplish. The group is the client.	• The consultant's role is to build constructive tension that serves to question unstated assumptions.
• Teams should be given time to work things out on their own.	• The consultant cannot afford to miss opportunities to help teams learn even if this creates some discomfort. Some discomfort is both common and necessary.
• Interventions focus almost exclusively on interpersonal and decision-making processes.	• Interventions focus both on content and process and are designed to assist team in questioning underlying assumptions.
• Teams' readiness for intervention is determined by their stage of development. Interventions must occur at a "teachable moment."	• All moments are teachable.

Problem Statement

This paper describes a pilot study of the team learning consultant framework. It examines the degree to which this framework, when compared to traditional process consultation, provides a practical and usable setting to guide interventions that have the potential to enhance the speed, depth, and breadth of team learning. It also aims to explore the responses of teams to the team learning process and identify their implications for the team learning consultant.

According to the organizational learning literature, teams frequently exhibit complex defensive routines when faced with the need to question the "governing variables" (shared assumptions, mental models, etc.) that have guided their collective actions to date (Argyris & Schon, 1996). These defensive routines act as unconscious conspiracies to "cover-up" undiscussable topics and "to cover up the cover up." Correspondingly, the literature describes the need for intensified levels of discomfort, conflict, ambiguity, and frustration to arise before teams are able to "discuss the undiscussable," to surface and question previously unchallenged assumptions, and to obtain breakthrough insights that result in the successful reframing of the presenting problem or issue.

The team learning consultation framework recognizes the potentially beneficial effects of tension, conflict, and frustration for the promotion of fast and deep learning. By seeking to surface the undiscussables and question previously unexplored assumptions, the team learning consultant's interventions may further sustain and intensify these tensions in order to overcome defensive routines and facilitate team learning. However, several possible professional and ethical dilemmas arise as a result. Could the team learning process evoke team responses that the team or the interventionist are unable to handle at the time? Are there certain levels of discomfort that surpass what is acceptable in a given context? Are there approaches (in terms of the way interventions are handled, the advance preparation of teams, the selection of and contracting with team members, etc.) that are necessary professional practices to reduce any destructive side-effects that might accompany the use of the team learning consultation framework?

Insights into potential team responses to team learning interventions are provided by the work of Bion (1959). Bion posited that the emergence of a group mentality or group mind might account for the disagreeable and often unproductive experiences of people in teams. Wells (1985) described this perspective as a focus on the group entity. He noted that it assumes individuals are vessels through which the group mind expresses itself (p. 114). Bion hypothesized that, when a group feels threatened or challenged, group members avoid the explicit work of the group, overcome by a primitive group mentality that reflects one of three basic assumptions:

1. Basic assumption Dependency (BaD) is apparent when group members behave as though one person (the leader) could magically gratify the group's needs. Bion argued that members experience high levels of anxiety, guilt, and resentment when engaged in BaD.
2. Basic assumption Fight/Flight (BaF) is observable when members behave as though they were called together for the purpose of preserving the group rather than any work at hand. Members behave as though the only way to accomplish this preservation is through fight or flight. BaFight is characterized by aggressive behavior and hatred toward others, while BaFlight is accompanied by high levels of anxiety and avoidance.
3. Basic assumption Pairing (BaP) occurs when group members behave as though the group purpose is reproduction. In BaP, Bion argued, two people undertake resolving the group's anxiety. Members of the BaP group tend to be obsessed by the future, and listen eagerly and attentively to any communication by the focal pair. The atmosphere is characterized by hopeful expectations, but actual problem finding and resolution are avoided (pp. 90 - 95).

Research Questions

The study sought to develop preliminary answers to the following questions:

1. To what degree does team learning consultation provide a practical framework that can guide the selection and timing of team-based interventions?
2. To what degree does the use of the team learning consultation framework enhance the speed, depth, and breadth of team learning compared to process consultation?
3. What team responses are elicited through the use of the team learning consultation framework, and what factors need to be considered in the use of the framework as a result?

Methodology

This study examined the team learning process of three teams formed in conjunction with a graduate-level university course. Each team followed a modified action learning process (Pedler, 1992). One team worked with a manufacturing firm, one a public utility, and the other a university. Three team learning consultants were selected based on the following criteria: previous experience as a process consultant, previous experience as a member of an action learning team, and working knowledge of organizational learning concepts. The three consultants participated in a one-day workshop designed to develop a shared understanding of the intervention framework. Each team met approximately six times over the 12-week period. Two observers rotated among the teams, noting the degree to which the consultants were consistent using the interventions as delineated in the workshop. After each meeting, the three team learning consultants met as a group, and the two observers provided feedback regarding the consistency of interventions among the teams and provided suggestions for the application of the team learning consultation model.

Data were obtained from audio tapes of team meetings and logs were kept by members describing their perceptions of the process. At the end of the project, the research team reviewed individual learning logs, audio tape recordings, and observer notes.

Results

The following is a presentation of the results for each research question:

Research Question #1: To what degree does team learning consultation provide a practical framework that can guide the selection and timing of team-based interventions? Data were obtained from interviews, learning logs, and reflective papers from the team learning consultants. Key findings include the following:

1. Initially, the consultants felt generally comfortable with assuming the team learning consultant role. They noted that the four-part intervention framework provided clear guidelines for determining when and how to intervene with their teams. They expressed less comfort with their ability to execute the full range of intervention methods identified in the consultant workshop.
2. Once beginning to work with the teams, consultants expressed much greater levels of uncertainty regarding the timing and choice of interventions. Each consultant found a different point in the model to be the most difficult; for one it was implementing Type 1 interventions, for another it was Type 2, and for the third it was Type 4.
3. After the research project was complete and each consultant had reviewed team members' logs and listened to audio tapes of team sessions, the consultants were surprised, and in some cases disturbed, that they missed many opportunities to intervene. They concluded that they were not as active or challenging with their teams as they thought they were at the time.
4. Each felt that their previous process consultation experience provided an important foundation to assume the role of a team learning consultant. However, each reported

struggling with reconciling the differences between the process consultation and team learning frameworks. In retrospect, each concluded that prior experience as a process consultant, while essential to assume the role as a team learning consultant, may have caused them to miss opportunities for intervention.

5. The consultants felt that their previous experience as members of learning teams was important for understanding the dynamics of the team learning process. None of the consultants discussed their previous experience as a team member with their teams, but noted in their logs that they drew on this experience as they consulted to the teams.

Research Question #2: To what degree does the use of the team learning consultation framework enhance the speed, depth, and breadth of team learning compared to process consultation?

Using the operational instructions and coding instructions from the first study (Jeris, May, & Redding, 1996), the research team reviewed individual learning logs, audio tape recordings, and observer notes. The research team reached consensus upon the following ratings of the learning cycles completed by each team: (See Table 2.)

Table 2. Research Team Ratings of Learning Cycles

Learning Cycles	Team #1	Team #2	Team #3
Iteration #1	Missed opportunity for double-loop learning	Missed opportunity for double-loop learning	No perceived error
Iteration #2	Missed opportunity for double-loop learning	Single-loop learning, Missed opportunity for double-loop learning	Double-loop learning
Iteration #3	Double-loop learning	Double-loop learning	Missed opportunity for double-loop learning
Iteration #4			Double-loop learning

The team ratings were then compared to team ratings from the preliminary study described earlier in which the process consultation framework was used to guide interventions. (See Table 3.) In both cases, results include the ratings of three teams over a 12 week period.

Table 3. Comparison of Ratings of Learning Cycles: Process Consultation Study vs. Team Learning Consultation Study

	Process Consultant Study	Team Learning Consultant Study
Total number of learning cycles	8	10
Total incidences of double-loop learning	1	4
Total missed opportunities for double-loop learning	6	5

The following findings might be drawn from this comparison:

- The number of iterations of the learning cycles is somewhat higher in the team learning consultant study than in the process consultant study. This finding provides some limited evidence that the team learning consultant framework serves to enhance the speed of team learning.
- The number of incidences of double-loop learning is substantially higher in the team learning consultant study. This finding provides evidence that the team learning consultant framework may have the potential to enhance the depth of team learning.

- The number of missed opportunities for double-loop learning remains at approximately the same level. This finding suggests that there may be a need to further refine the model and/or enhance the application of the model to realize its potential impact upon team learning.

As noted, this study was based upon a conceptual framework that identified three factors to consider in determining the degree of team learning: speed, depth, and breadth. While providing some evidence of the potential impact of the team learning consultant role upon the speed and depth of learning, it did not provide useful information regarding the breadth of learning.

Research Question #3: What team responses are elicited as a result of the team learning process, and what factors need to be considered by a team learning consultant as a result?

Using a critical incident approach, the research team reviewed team member logs and audio tape recordings to identify incidents that might be characterized according to Bion's (1959) three basic assumption groups: BaF: Fight/Flight, BaD: Dependency, and BaP: Pairing. The research team reached consensus that each of the incidents associated with one of the teams could be classified according to one of the three basic assumption groups as follows:

Team 1: BaP: Pairing. Much of the team's meeting time was devoted to the interaction of two members. At points when the team seemed unsure of future direction, there appeared to be increased emphasis upon the pair for direction. Other members of the team expressed appreciation for the contribution the two made to the success of the team and rarely questioned the pair's assumptions regarding the presenting issue.

Team 2: BaD: Dependency. Group members tended to defer to a dominant "leader." In individual team member logs, there were frequent statements of concern about the team's direction, guilt whether they were delivering the product the client organization needed, and resentment toward the leader. Yet, within team meetings, group members tended to defer to the judgment of the team leader.

Team 3: BaF: Fight/Flight. Group meetings were characterized by aggressive verbal statements among team members. In early meetings, the statements were fairly indirect and subtle. In mid-stage meetings, the statements became more clear and direct. At the final meeting, the statements were highly personal, attributing team difficulties to the personal biases and styles of other team members.

Reviewing the critical incidents of all three teams, the research team made the following observations:

- The incidents described did not appear to occur as the direct result of the team learning consultant's interventions with the teams. However, they did seem to relate to the ambiguity and frustration that appear to be an inherent part of the team learning process.
- In several cases, the team learning consultants intervened when the team exhibited behaviors associated with a basic assumption group. In several of these cases, an episode of double-loop learning was observed to occur. Moreover, the behaviors associated with the basic assumption group dissipated, at least for a period of time.
- There was some feeling by team members that steps could have been taken to better prepare the team for the team learning process such as, increasing team member understanding of how the team learning process works, shaping realistic expectations about the process including fairly high levels of ambiguity, frustration and conflict.

Conclusions and Discussion

Results suggest the following conclusions:

1. The team learning consultation framework can be successfully used as a flexible guide to the selection and timing of team-based interventions.
2. Interventions based upon the team learning process appear to enhance the depth of team learning and, to a lesser degree, the speed of team learning. No evidence was provided related to the breadth of team learning.

3. The nature of the team learning process may elicit higher levels of anxiety, aggression, frustration, and these responses appear to align with the three basic assumption groups identified by Bion (1959).
4. Team learning consultant interventions appear to help teams in working through their basic assumption group responses.
5. Team learning consultant interventions that occur in response to basic assumption group behaviors appear to facilitate double-loop learning.

The study's results lead to several recommendations that may serve to enhance the use of the team learning consultation framework:

1. Enhance the degree and quality of preparation of team members for the team learning process. This preparation should include the clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of the team members and the team learning consultant. It is suggested that screening criteria be established for team members and that membership in learning teams be voluntary.
2. Encourage team learning consultants to be more active and challenging in their interventions. This might be done through several means:
   - Provide more in-depth initial training in the recognition of intervention opportunities and the use of specific intervention techniques
   - Provide opportunities for new consultants to shadow experienced team learning consultants
   - Provide increased feedback to team learning consultants regarding missed opportunities for intervention
   - Develop and enhance consultant's skills in recognizing and effectively intervening with teams manifesting behaviors common to basic assumption groups.

Several major limitations to the study are obvious, most notably its scope in terms of sample size, range of topics, and organizational strategic issues. The time constraint of a 12-week period may not allow the researchers to capture the long-term effects of using this approach. It is recommended that further research be conducted that expands the study to include a greater number of teams, broader range of topics, and longer span of time. It is also recommended that further research examine the interrelationship of the basic assumptions groups with the three phases of the learning cycle. Finally, it is suggested that a research methodology be developed to capture the impact of the team learning consultant framework upon the breadth of team learning, as well as the speed and depth of team learning.

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